

REDEEMER SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Part IV – Group Life

Casting a Vision for Your Group

Our Mission:

To facilitate intimate loving relationships between students and mentors where participants experience growth toward Christlikeness together for the purpose of developing spiritually mature leaders who will glorify God eternally.

Our mission is the reason why our small groups exist, our purpose for them. It is the big picture of what our small groups are for.

A vision is the direction in which you take the mission.

Go over *Redeemer Student Ministries* brochure for an example of the overall purpose of our ministry and the direction our ministry hopes to take based on that. The vision is very concrete – you can feel it. The purpose asks, “So what? Why are you doing this?” whereas the vision asks, “What will it look like?”

Each small group will be made up of individuals that are unique to that group. Every group will have its own dynamic, gifts, and personality. Your group will look at this purpose statement and take it in a direction that’s different from the other groups because God wired each of you differently. That’s why I am not going to write your vision for you. God’s given each of you a unique vision based on your gifts, passion, personality, etc.

Developing you group’s vision

A vision must be:

- **Concise** – Long, drawn out visions are hard to remember and difficult to communicate. A sentence or two is fine! (Y.G.’s vision, “Dream Big!”)
- **Clear** – Make sure your vision is easily understood. Is it clear what the group really wants to see happen in the group?
- **Consistent** – Is it consistent with the overall purpose of small groups and the youth ministry?
- **Compelling** – Is your vision something you can sink your teeth into? Is it something worth rallying around? Does it reflect the passion of your group?
- **Easily Communicated** – Can the members of your group communicate the vision? It should be worded in such a way that the phrases are easily spoken and remembered.
- **Collaborative** – The vision should be developed together with the rest of your group in order to reflect the values of the group. The more that people own the vision, the more they will make a commitment to it. Remember, the scripture says, “Without vision, the people will perish.”

Developing Objectives for Your Group

Go over handout

Stages of Group Life

Groups, like all living organisms, move through stages of development. This chart will help you prepare for each stage. Often leaders take the blame for changes in group dynamics that are, in reality, simply the result of a shift in development. Use this chart to develop a strategy for moving through each stage.

Go over handout

Keys to forming covenants

Covenants are expressions of group values, expectations, or behaviors for which we hold ourselves mutually accountable. Covenants are based on love and loyalty and are only valid if all parties seek to fulfill the covenant obligations. For our purposes, these covenants will be written down and signed by each group member.

Go over handout

Stages of group life

Go over handout

Keys to forming covenants

Go over handout

Small Group Values

Small Group Values

These are values that are key for small group relationships. This only a sample set of values. You and your group should create your own list with values central to your group. The important thing is that your members are committed to growing in relationships and maturity in Christ.

- **Affirmation** – It is important to create an atmosphere where group members affirm and encourage one another, build each other up in Christ, and help each other grow.
- **Availability** – Group members and their resources should be available to each other. People's time, attention, insight, as well as material resources, must be made available to each other in order to meet needs and serve one another.
- **Prayer** – Prayer is valued in group life. The group comes together before God to praise, ask, confess, and thank the Lord for all he has done. Prayer encourages group members to be humble, knowing that all comes from God.
- **Openness** – Openness in the relationships within the group promotes honesty and an ease of sharing feelings, struggles, joys, and hurts. Reaching the goal of authentic relationships begins with being open with each other.
- **Honesty** – The desire to be honest with each other is critical to authentic relationships. In order for trust to be built among the group members, they must speak the truth in love, so that "we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Eph. 4:15).
- **Safety** – Honest, open relationships must be guarded with an agreement of safety, that what is said in the group will remain confidential, that opinions will be respected and differences will be allowed.

- **Confidentiality** – As part of the concept of safety, confidentiality promotes openness by promising that whatever is shared within the confines of the group will not be repeated otherwise.
- **Sensitivity** – A commitment to sensitivity to the needs, feelings, backgrounds, and current situations of other group members will help build relationships in the group.
- **Accountability** – In authentic relationships, accountability is voluntary submission to another group members for support, encouragement, and help in a particular area of your life, giving them some responsibility for assisting you in that area.
- **Evangelism** – As a group, evangelism is being committed to expanding the community of believers through such things as sharing your faith, using the “open chair” to invite people into the group, or other types of outreach.
- **Multiplication** – Having your group grow and eventually birth a new group enables the group to carry out the vision of seeing more people connected in Christian community, growing in their relationship with Christ.

WE WANT OUR GROUP TO BE...

Planning for Life Change

Date: _____

Leader: _____

Describe a picture of what you want your group to look like in 4 to 6 months. Jot down some action steps and target dates for completing those steps.

Maturing Specifically, in _____ months, we would like to see our group...

Spiritually

_____.

As a leader, I will take these steps:

By the following date: _____

Growing Specifically, in _____ months, we would like to see our group...

Relationally

_____.

As a leader, I will take these steps:

By the following date: _____

Fostering Specifically, in _____ months, we would like to see our group...

Safety

_____.

As a leader, I will take these steps:

By the following date: _____

**Generating
Excitement**

Specifically, in _____ months, we would like to see our group...

_____.

As a leader, I will take these steps:

By the following date: _____

**Welcoming
Outsiders**

Specifically, in _____ months, we would like to see our group...

_____.

As a leader, I will take these steps:

By the following date: _____

**Preparing
to Birth**

Specifically, in _____ months, we would like to see our group...

_____.

As a leader, I will take these steps:

By the following date: _____

STAGES OF GROUP LIFE

Adapted from "Small Group Leader's Handbook" by InterVarsity

Stage	Formation	Exploration	Transition	Action	Birthing	Termination
# Meetings Per Stage	4-6	6-8	4-8	10-20	4-8	2-4
Member's Questions	Who is in the group? Do I like my group?	Do I fit here? How is our group doing?	Are we really open with each other? Will this group accomplish its mission?	How will we do this? What can we accomplish together? Will we take the risk?	Will we survive? How will we change?	Did we grow? What did we learn? Will I join another group?
Member's Feelings	Excitement Anticipation Awkwardness	Conformable Relaxed Open	Tense Anxious Impatient Doubtful	Eager Open Vulnerable Supportive	Grief Enthusiasm Loss Fear	Respectful Reflective Thankful Sad
Member's Role	Gather information about others	Give information Accept others	Provide feedback Express frustration	Express feelings Use my gifts Take ownership Accept challenges	Express concerns Accept reality Discuss changes Give blessing	Show love Express thanks Affirm relationships
Leader's Response	Caring Clear Accepting	Affirmation Feedback Warmth Modeling	Confront Encourage Challenge	Challenge Affirm Guide Release	Listen actively Acknowledge feelings Affirm members	Review Reflect Respond
Leader's Role	Communicate vision Promote sharing Define goals	Generate trust Discuss values Facilitate relationships Create covenant	Provide self-disclosure Re-examine covenant Be flexible	Provide service opportunities Clarify goals Begin seeking 2 nd apprentice Celebrate results	Cast vision Pray for birth Communicate with apprentice	Celebrate Give gifts Communion Bring closure
Content of Communication	Events Topics Facts	Topics People Group God's nature	Personal thoughts Feelings Values God's plan	Group relationships Tasks God's work	People Leadership Vision God's desires	Relationships People God's blessings
Style of Communication	Responsive General Brief	Descriptive Social Explanatory	Aggressive Argumentative Direct One-way	Speculative Cooperative Interactive Two-way Confrontive	Interactive Confrontive Expressive	Reflective Understanding Affirming

KEYS TO FORMING COVENANTS

1. The values around which a group makes a covenant must be generated by the group, not imposed by the leader.
2. Group covenants should always be in the form of “I” and “you” statements as opposed to “we” statements. Covenants are more personal if “I” is used.
3. Covenants must be reaffirmed on a periodic basis so that members remember their commitment to one another.
4. Covenants should be created around logistics and values.

Logistics

- Where and when we will meet
- How often we will meet
- Who is responsible for leading
- Who will handle refreshments
- Attendance expectations

Values

- A. Open chair
- B. Accountability
- C. Openness
- D. Confidentiality
- E. Acceptance

5. Covenants must be formed over time through a process that involves everyone. For an example of how that process might look, please look at the sample below.

A Process for Making Covenants that Create Community

Meeting #1 – Hand out a 3x5 card and ask the group members to write two or three values/behaviors they expect from the others in the group.

Meeting #2 – The leader compiles a list of values from the last meeting and puts them all on a sheet of paper. Ask the group to break out into subgroups of two or three people and rank the values, identifying the top five.

Meeting #3 – The leader presents the top values compiled from the previous week and presents a final list of the top five to seven values. (You really don’t want more than five to seven. Most groups can’t remember more than that, so try to focus on the key ones.)

Meeting #4 – The leader hands out the final list of values with a two or three-sentence explanation of each. Every member signs the covenant, agreeing to operate by these values. This entire process can take two or three meetings, or you can spread it out over more meetings as the group desires.

SAMPLE SMALL GROUP COVENANT

1. The vision of our group is...
2. We will meet for _____ weeks, after which we will evaluate our direction.
3. We will meet from _____ to _____, and we will strive to start and end on time.
4. We will meet at _____ (place).
5. The “serve” component of our group will have the following plans and parameters... (Consider going as a group one time inside the church and one time outside the church annually.)
6. The “learn” component (biblical curriculum) will be...
7. We will agree on the following primary values for our group...

Priority: While we are in the group, we will give the group meetings priority, and if we are unable to attend or are running late, we will call ahead.

Participation: Everyone is given the right to their own opinion, and “dumb questions” are encouraged and respected.

Confidentiality: Anything of a personal nature that is said in the meeting is never repeated outside the meeting.

Open chair: The group stays open to new people as long as they understand the ground rules. The guidelines for filling the open chair in our group will be...

Group birthing: After the appropriate time, this group will help start or birth other groups.

Apprentice leader(s): We will strive to identify and develop the apprentices in our group.

Other:

8. For the agreed time, we will seek to serve one another by sharing some or all of the following roles and responsibilities: leader, apprentice(s), host/hostess, prayer coordinator, event planner, administrator, etc...

Have each group member sign and date this. Give a copy to Tim.